

## Book Reviews

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Section Editor

**The Citadel of the Senses**, by Macdonald Critchley, New York, Raven Press, 1985, 375 pp, \$29.50.

In October 1985, I lunched with Macdonald Critchley, Commander of the British Empire, neurologist, and *raconteur extraordinaire*, in the company of his wife, Eileen, for whom *The Citadel of the Senses* was written. We were accompanied by several British neurologists. Lunch was served in the dining hall of The London Hospital Medical School in Whitechapel. The food was (barely) passable British school fare, but the conversation was superb, being made that way by Critchley's verbal eruptions into essay, anecdote, and vignette. All of the conversation was enlivening, like the essays and conversations which constitute this little gem of a book. The author is well into his 80s—his “anecdotage” (as he terms senescence in this work, defining it as a state not to be confused with senility). Critchley seems sagacious and reserved without sounding so and with being so in his writings. In conversation with him, his eyes are watery, his visage distant but not sad, as he speaks of the heyday of neurology in London in the time between the great world wars. He writes about this in *The Citadel of the Senses* as he discusses the “Hexagon Club,” an exclusive and semisecretive dining society composed of himself, Sir Hugh Carins, Sir Russell Brain, George Riddoch, and Sir Charles Symonds, who were occasionally joined in their repasts by interlopers such as Harvey Cushing, Ottfried Föerster, and Francois L'hermitte. Critchley takes the reader not only to dine, but into the conversation and thought of all of them.

Macdonald Critchley lived in London his whole adult life, but was born in Somersetshire at Weston-super-Mare. He lives in the West Country again, at Nether Stowey, in Somerset. He loves the English country and revels in its people. The bucolic side of Critchley is emphasized in this collection of essays in his treatment of Hughlings Jackson; Dr. Samuel Johnson; and John Addington Symonds, *primus et secundus*.

An essay written about his first clinical “chief,” Dr. Newman Neild of Manchester, is especially touching. Critchley states that “he [Neild] was very much the cat that walked alone,” but he views Neild with 10 lovely paragraphs describing touching human characteristics, foibles, and anecdotes. The essay contains

a cartoon of the “clean-shaven and gnome-like” Neild. This essay and many others are written warmly and amusingly, but not uncritically. Macdonald Critchley, the commentator, is not without a certain venom at times, terming Oscar Wilde a “hysterical psychopath,” ignoring the fact that the words of the English language never before or since attained such splendor as when uttered by that sad Irishman. In *The Citadel of the Senses*, Critchley discusses some of his favorite subjects: the life and lunchtimes of Joseph François Babinski, the human nose, famous luetics, tatooed people, laughter and smiling, Siamese twins, polylingualism as a source of lack of mental clarity, the inscrutability of pain, and the nature of music. It is reading to be savored.

Macdonald Critchley's books quickly go out of print, being snapped up by aficionados willing to pay (or do) anything to get their hands and eyes on these tomes. I am such a cultist. I put Critchley right up there with Wilde, Thurber, and Vonnegut. My advice is to buy 10 copies of *The Citadel of the Senses*, keep one at your bedstand to be taken nightly with a dose of brandy, and give the others to your nine best friends. Critchley is a one-man renaissance. And if you ever come across a copy of his *Black Hole of Calcutta*, call collect and let me know how I can get it.

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**Cleft Palate Speech**, by Betty Jane McWilliams, Hughlett L. Morris, and Ralph J. Shelton, Philadelphia, BC Decker, 1984, 357 pp, \$36.00.

Despite the enormity of the topic, the authors of this book have clearly and thoroughly provided extensive information about all aspects of the problem and management of cleft palate speech. The text is extremely well organized. Initially, the nature of difficulties, related disorders, and involvement by personnel from other disciplines is presented. Further chapters pertain to assessment of the velopharyngeal mechanism and the nature of its function. Lastly, diagnosis